Informant: LMP-S12 Language: English
Date: 5-24-02 Format: Mini DV
Interviewers: Michael Owen Jones,
Barry Prigge, & Claudia Hernández
Transcriber: Reyna C. Ronelli

S12: They really do not mean anything in English if you translate them. These are the names we popularly know them by.

BP: You got us already (laughs). A sneak attack.

S12: A sneak attack, I'm telling you.

MOJ: S12, you sound great.

S12: I sound great? I like that, Ok. Now, we start here with the coffee because we do use the coffee leaves.

BP: Anything besides the stimulant effect or?

S12: For headaches. We usually grind them and apply them like a poultice for headaches and migraines-the new shoots. We cut at the tip. That's why I was just so excited when I got my coffee tree.

BP: How long have you had it?

S12: Because now I can have my leaves, whenever people come over.

BP: Have you been able to roast any coffee?

S12: Well, no this is the biggest harvest, so I'm waiting for it to get really there, and see what's up. We usually use the new leaves because they are the strongest and we use them for migraines. We grind them and then we apply it for migraines, headaches, and all that kind of stuff. I figure that if the coffee does that for you, well...

BP: You prefer the new leaves? They're more potent?

S12: Yes, they are more potent because, see if you – well you know about that, but anyways when it is time to wither and die...but this one is almost flawless, you know what I mean? When we work, we usually go for the new shoots. Almost always, unless you do not want to mess it up too much. Then, you have no choice but to take a bunch of the old ones.

BP: Unless you don't want to what?

S12: To mess up the whole tree.

BP: To damage it.

S12: Yes, instead of using two of these, you might use the whole branch of these two to make up for the new ones. What I know is basically that, if you take all these tips, the tree will shoot up. It will grow. If you take it from the top, it will grow to the side, so it depends on what you want to do with the tree, and that's what you go for.

BP: It's like pruning.

S12: Yes, it's like pruning. You want to keep your plant or your tree going in such a way that it doesn't get damaged because then you might find yourself not able to use it later because by the time it recovers... You might not want to touch it until it recovers. There's this one.

BP: So, what do you use the "***rompe***" for?

S12: "***Rompesaraguey****"* has ritual uses, but it also has medicinal uses, especially with problems with feet.

BP: Feet?

S12: Like for a footbath.

BP: I need that. How about for tired, lazy feet?

S12: That's what it is for. It has a sticky gum, sticky resin.

BP: Yes, it's a bit sticky.

S12: It doesn't smell, it's just the stickiness.

BP: No aroma at all.

S12: And that's good because the problem when people do things for the feet is that the aroma and the sweat, and the whole thing – but this one will really relieve your feet. If you boil it and put it there, it will work fine.

CH: For pain?

S12: Yes, for people with flat feet, it is very good because those are the people that get really tired. When you have flat feet, you get really tired.

BP: If you run around a lot you should bathe your feet?

S12: Yes. If you stand a lot too.

CH: So, it's soothing.

S12: If you stand a lot too, like if you are standing up all day, this is a good thing to do. The wonderful thing is that it grows all over the freeway. If you take the 10 or the 101, it is all over the place. If you can sneak out without the cops seeing you, you can just get it from the freeway.

BP: It grows a lot in some of the canyons.

S12: A piece like this, you just stick it in the ground. This thing is just stronger than hate. It will grow. You just take a little piece of this and just stick it in, and it just grows. It is just very hearty. It is very invasive too. That's one other thing. Once this thing starts flying, it's very invasive.

CH: Like is that "***rompesaraguey?"***

S12: Yes. Once those things start flying, forget it. When I planted this one, it was a little piece, about three inches, and if I'm not careful, it will take over the whole thing.

CH: So, you said that you use the leaves for the bath, for the water-foot soak?

S12: You have to boil it.

BP: About how much?

S12: Well, to be honest with you, I usually will take probably two or three cups of leaves.

BP: That's a lot of leaves.

S12: They grow so fast. If you take the oldest growth, they are huge leaves. This one, I just pruned it. It was coming out all the way out here. That's a lot of leaves. It is just so invasive. It's just amazingly prolific in it's growth.

CH: Are the flowers used or the stem?

S12: No, just the leaves.

BP: Is this for decoration?

S12: Just for decoration and ritual purposes as well. It has many names. In Brazil it is called "Espada de Oggun:" the sword of Oggun. In Spanish, we are less kind. We call it "lengua de suegra:" mother in law's tongue.

CH: Or "***orejas de burro***."

S12: Also. We are less kind with mother in laws. We're really bad. If we move this way – sorry about the mess, I haven't been able to come down here to fix this. There is the papaya, ooooh, this one is ready to go. The papaya, we use both the fruit, and the leaf as a digestive aid. It is very good for digestion, especially for people with stomach problems.

BP: For protein digestion, isn't it?

S12: Yes, it is very good. The leaves are also used. They are taken as an infusion. Also, for certain skin problems, you boil them. See this one, you can't use. They are just... If we are going to go, we're going to have to go back here with the new growth because they are cleaner.

BP: Do you ever apply the leaves directly to the sores and stuff?

S12: No, not really-just an infusion. Then we have -

BP: [¿??]

S12: Yes, this is a big one. A very problematic one because this one if you are not careful, it can get you really high, especially the root. People used to take the root, boil it, and mix it with beer, and they would get on a high note.

BP: It is mostly used to get high, or is it used to...

S12: No, no, no, it is very good for people who are tense, with hypertension – for obvious reasons. It just relaxes you beyond belief. Actually, this plant you find a lot in Puerto Rico, planted near wells.

BP: Near wells.

S12: Usually, the water from the wells, where this tree is, is really, really good. It is very relaxing.

BP: [¿??]

S12: Oh, yes. You sit there and you are like, forget it. You sit there, and you feel so good, for obvious reasons. The root is very – it has something that makes people really like - it gives people some kind of high, and so when we use it, we have to control the amount, especially the root.

BP: From what I read, the potency of these trees varies from individual to individual tremendously. You really need somebody who knows the potency of the plant before you use it.

S12: And depending on where you go. It's less potent from the top, as you work your way down it gets...

BP: Have you ever used the leaves to put on aches and pains?

S12: The leaves are used for infusions. You drink it, but the root-yes, the root; you macerate it, and apply it.

BP: As a poultice?

S12: And apply it as a poultice, especially for painful sores.

BP: So, is it used for arthritis, or ¿???

S12: Not that I know of, but if you have any kind of pain, probably, when you say muscular pain or body aches, you apply it. If it's arthritic pain, because it usually feels numb or relaxes the area, so it depends, you have to...

BP: When you say sores, you're referring to aches and pains or ¿??

S12: Open sores and aches and pains. If you apply it to a sore, it will be very good, but at the same time, if your body is aching or whatever, it depends, you can bathe, you can drink it, and you can do all kinds of... It depends how far you want to go with the treatment, you know what I mean, because if it is a problematic leaf, plant to work with.

BP: Now, they grow this a lot as a horticultural plant here in Los Angeles.

S12: Oh, it's wonderful – the smell of the flower. The white is the best one.

BP: The white is the best one?

S12: Yes, here you have, what is that – yellow, pinks, and orange but those are just cute.

BP: There's a red one too.

S12: Usually people that use this are going to use this one.

BP: Ok.

S12: You know the white one is the most... I have a yellow one in the front but that's for decoration.

BP: That has no effect.

S12: You can take that one. This one I only cut! I'm the only one trimming this one. That's why it's back here.

BP: That's probably why the orange one, yellow one is ¿?? You buy it at the nursery.

S12: Absolutely. But this one, that's why it's back here. You notice that I have this chair in front and stuff like that. I mean you really have to come and search for it if you want to see it. The other one is in my driveway, I mean who cares.

MOJ: Where did you get this plant? Did you bring it in your self?

S12: Yes.

MOJ: From Puerto Rico?

S12: Yes.

BP: I think originally it's from the Andes area, the genus [¿??]. From what I read, they don't know any wild populations over there. They think it's cultivated.

S12: It's interesting. I was telling Jones when we started this project that I remember in my grandfather's farm there was a huge tree and like right there, there was a well and that's where we used to get water. There was a couple of them in the farm but we always got it from that one because the water was the most excellent water [¿???] and you could see the roots just getting into the water. I mean by the time you get that water, it was already infused with whatever – very good, and then back here, this is – I call it Caribbean Sage to differentiate it from the sage that you get here in California.

BP: What's the name?

S12: It's Sage, Salvia, S – A – L – V – I – A.

BP: But you said Caribbean Sage?

S12: Caribbean, from the Caribbean, Caribbean sage, yes. There's a variety here in California that [sounds like: the one I have in front is different]. This one and this one are very much for asthma, colds, and stuff like that. You want t a piece with a flower?

BP: They are not open yet.

S12: No, they are not.

BP: Maybe we can get a picture of that.

S12: [¿???].

MOJ: What part?

BP: See the flowers that are just about ready to open?

MOJ: Yeah.

BP: Maybe I can come back and get a specimen of it.

MOJ: We'll have Claudia take a photograph.

S12: Yeah, very tricky plant to use because... very good for headaches, for asthma, pulmonary situations, very problematic, very hot.

BP: [¿??]

S12: Yeah, you've got to be very careful, because this plant when you apply it, you have to be away from drafts and the cold. You can't step on the floor. It will give you spasms, muscular spasms.

BP: Oh really?

S12: Yeah, so usually when you apply it you have to really cover yourself up, and not get on the cold floor. You have to be really, really careful with that because sometimes if you don't then the remedy is worst than the disease, you know. This one I have a better plant of, back there it is already in bloom so I'll show you that one. This too I have very good specimens out there. This one I have to transplant it. That's "***poleo***," yeah.

BP: Isn't this peppermint?

S12: No, it's not. I have peppermint there but I have that one and then this one. Chew it.

BP: Yeah.

S12: So, I have [¿??] specimens up there. They are both very important – stomach problems, indigestion...

BP: What do you call this one?

S12: Poleo, P – O – L – E – O.

BP: This is a mint?

S12: No, it's not a mint. Not that I know of. I don't think they are related. When we get out there I'll show you the flower. It's a pink flower, and this one, see, there's a seed in here?

BP: This is real peppermint?

S12: Yeah. This is good for stomach problems, problems with digestion.

BP: Digestion?

S12: Yeah, people have problems digesting – what we call lazy stomachs. You know what I mean?

BP: Yeah.

S12: People that take a long time to digest, and so this is very good, very good also for people who have restless sleep, you know taken before going to bed either in conjunction with mint – it's very good, excellent, excellent plant, very, very good. It's a natural sweetener so you don't have to add nothing. Add a couple of leaves to any infusion and it turns it absolutely sweet, you know? This one...

BP: [¿??]

S12: Yeah, let me take you upstairs because the one upstairs, I think is blooming, ok. Back there we have the fig, God, this one...

BP: This is Elderberry.

S12: That's what you call it in English, Elderberry?

BP: In English, [¿??].

S12: What did you say the name of that thing is?

BP: Sambucus.

S12: Because in Spanish it's Sauco.

BP: Sauco.

S12: It might be a....

BP: A cognate.

S12: A cognate, yes. It's called Sauco, Sauco Blanco, there are two but this is Sauco Blanco because of the flower and it's very good for arthritis, especially the flower.

BP: How do you spell Sauco?

S12: S – A – U – C – O, there's an acute accent over the U. So this, this, the flower above all applied to swollen joints just will ease arthritic pain.

BP: Any other use?

S12: Basically arthritis, people with arthritis. I haven't cut this one because my wife has problems with arthritis.

BP: It's just the flower?

S12: The flower, yeah, mostly the flower. The leaves are good but the flower are more potent and when you don't have the flower, which is most of the year, what we do is we cut the flowers and then we freeze them.

BP: And what about the fruits, do you use them?

S12: No, the fruit we don't use, just the flower.

BP: You make a wine out of the fruits – Elderberry wine.

S12: Oh yeah, don't tell me that!

BP: I don't know if that has any therapeutic value?

S12: It'll get you happy.

BP: Ok.

S12: It's like one day someone was asking me, "do you celebrate Christmas?" I said, "are you kidding, I'm from the Caribbean, we celebrate anything."

BP: What is this?

S12: This is called "***boton de oro***."

BP: "***Boton de oro***," ok, yeah.

S12: Very popular.

BP: What's it used for?

S12: Ceremonially, basically used for ritual use, el Boton de Oro, and if I'm not careful when cutting it, it will take over again shamelessly too. It will just absolutely take over. Then, we have the fig back here, all the way to the bottom. We're going to have to...let's see you guys, have you – oooooh we have eggs, oh goodness I have to come here and raid the nest. Look at that.

BP: Oh yeah.

S12: They are serious, man! I have my figs here, fig tree.

BP: This is just the common fig?

S12: The common fig, yeah.

BP: And other than being edible?

S12: Oh, you can cook with this – the leaves, when you make...for certain jams and stuff. It just gets rid of certain bitterness of certain fruits and confections, so you can cook with this. Especially if you are going to clean [¿??] like churlings and stuff. Figs and guavas are the best thing to clean them. You can get rid of the odd odor that they have. It's just very powerful, plus as a detergent, you know, once you wash [¿??] it will take away the bitterness of certain food.

BP: So you use it in the washing of the...

S12: And cooking, you dump it in there.

BP: Dump it in there?

S12: Oh yes, you dump it in there, besides it's a wonderful fruit too.

BP: Oh yeah.

S12: This is that, ok let's move this way. (talking to chickens: que pasa papito, papi) Ok, and this is the common plantain. Look at this it's just a weed but it's very good when people, for people who are taking chemo.

BP: Oh really?

S12: Oh yes, it's excellent, excellent, excellent.

BP: [¿??]

S12: You drink it. You boil it, and it just takes care of a lot of the nausea and all the messed up symptoms that people associate with chemo which are just devastating.

BP: That's just the leaves?

S12: Just the leaves. You take the leaves, you know, and you know again, this is the – I have a couple of them but I don't buy them because all you have to do is walk on the UCLA campus and it's all over the place before they do the lawn you can get a lot of it. It's very good for people that are on chemo.

BP: They use the seeds at all?

S12: No, just the leaves.

BP: Other [¿??] use seeds as a laxative.

S12: Well the only one I know because this I'm familiar with also, when I was growing up. This is the one that I know, and it grows all over the place so whenever I have people with chemo, that are going through chemo, this is the first thing I tell them, just come here, look at the plant, look how it grows, and then wherever you it, see snatch it, and boil it, and drink it as common water. Whenever you need to drink liquid, us that water because it's very, very good. For as a laxative, we use the seed of the castor plant, you know the big "***higuereta.***"

BP: Yeah, castor bean.

S12: Castor bean, yeah, that's the perfect thing.

BP: [¿??]

S12: [¿??] It will make you be sorry.

BP: [¿??]

S12: I know. I got tortured all my life because of it.

BP: Dewormer.

S12: Yeah, see this one has a flower. This is the one I was talking to you about. This is in bloom already, see?

BP: This is a (sounds like: herbanaycee, a lypia) or something like that.

S12: And here is the seed, the dried seed.

BP: Yeah, I want to get a specimen of that too.

S12: Ok, I tell you because this is a better one.

BP: And you use that in the same way you use mint or?

S12: Yes, you boil it and you mix it with the most unusual things – salt and sugar together in equal proportions. It tastes like hell. My mother...

BP: It aids digestion?

S12: It helps especially heavy problems with indigestion, you know. I guess that you just get so scared by taking it that you get cured because you don't want a second dosage. It tastes so bad, my mother used to give me that because I was always eating anything and whatever so I was always coming up with all kinds of stomach problems. I was probably raised on this. The other one here is already in bloom that is the other one we saw down there. You can see it in bloom see?

BP: Yeah.

S12: It's a bigger specimen.

BP: It's the peppermint.

S12: It's not. This is not peppermint.

BP: Is it?

S12: No, it's not, peppermint is this one.

BP: Right, that's peppermint, o.k.

S12: This is peppermint, and this is spearmint. But they probably are from the same family but they just don't...

BP: I'm not sure which one [¿??].

S12: I know that in English they usually call it Lantana but...

BP: I'll take a specimen.

S12: Yeah, I don't know, I just know it as "***Coralillo***," I mean "***Orosun***."

BP: Orosun?

S12: It's one of those weird names. Oh, you have good print, good penmanship.

BP: Ok, you think its Lantana?

S12: Lantana, yes, I'm pretty sure it is because that's what many people that know it – Oh that's Lantana! And this one, the flower is the only part we use for people with diabetes. They tend to develop eyesight problems. I have been able to use the water infused with the flower to wash the eyes and take care of many of the problems associated with...

BP: What's the name you call it?

S12: Playera, P – L –

BP: A – Y

S12: Y – E – R – A.

BP: Playera.

S12: Playera, and then the Cubans call this one Vicraria, "V" like in Victor, I – C – R – A- A – R – I – A, Vicraria, it's the same name for the same...

BP: We call it periwinkle, or...

S12: Oh, yeah?

BP: The scientific name is Catharansis rosea, it's pretty common.

S12: Oh, it's common in many colors.

BP: White and pink and -

S12: All colors, but the only one that is good for that is this one. Only the white one because there is a white one with a little red center and it would have to be this one. See the unnoticeable yellow center, you know it's almost yellow-green center. It would have to bee this one.

BP: An infusion for [¿??]?

S12: Yeah, you put it in water and you let it rest. You let the flowers rest in that water, and whatever they distill, that is what you wash your eyes with.

BP: It's for redness or?

S12: It's for redness, and it takes care also for cataracts and infections of the eyes. It stings, you know it's very stingy but it's very good. It's almost like pouring alcohol in your eyes. Once the stinging is gone, that's why you don't boil it, you don't want too much of that, you know what I mean? But if you do it in a certain amount of time it will improve and I have a lot of success using it with people that had eye problems associated with diabetes, but it has to be this one. This is the only that has survived and I don't want to transplant it because it's very hard to find. If she's happy there, leave it there.

BP: Ok.

S12: The rest, we're waiting for them to come up because they are dormant still. We need a hotter climate for them to come out. We have the guava, which is very good in

infusion and along with the leaf of the fig, if you mix them together when you are washing things like that...

BP: The guava leaf or guava fruit?

S12: The leaf. The guava fruit you just-

BP: You just eat it.

S12: Yes, and then we have here, what's the name of this?

BP: [¿??]?

S12: No, no, no, no, this one – lavender! Very good for female douches – takes care of certain female problems, and the flower is good to stuff onions and eat them. They're so good.

BP: Stop, onions?

S12: Onions stuffed with lavender flowers, oh they are so good!

BP: What was that?

S12: You know you take the flower, you know the little blue flower that you use as a sachet, ok, then you take the onion, you peel it, you open it, and then you stick it in there and boil it. It's excellent! My wife can do real damage with onions and that because she's good at that, you know. It kills two birds with one shot. You can eat your onion and you can have fresh breath afterwards (laughs). You can't ask for anything better.

BP: Ok.

S12: Lets move this way. We're going to have to move the car out of the way. Let's see, this way.

BP: [¿??] This one as potent?

S12: This one no, that's why I have it here; it's like really blah. But that one, I guess it's because of the shadow. That one most of the day is in the shadow. This one is always in the sun. The sun really hits it; see if you notice the leaf. But that one, you see how big the leaves are? So I think that the shadow has a lot to do with it.

BP: Cassia.

S12: Yeah, Cassia, Acacia.

BP: [¿??]

S12: No, just decoration and ritual. This one, I brought the seed from Puerto Rico. This is good to eat.

BP: Mmmmm.

S12: It's a type of legume, it's "***gandul***."

BP: What's it called, the Spanish name for it?

S12: G – A – N – D – U – L.

BP: Gandul?

S12: Aha.

BP: It's a legume?

S12: Well, it's very good because it is very rich in iron. People with iron deficiencies will take a... If you put this in water, and you boil it, the water just turns black.

BP: You eat it as a pea?

S12: Just like a pea. You can use it in soups, you can use it with rice, and you can use it in a bean stew. You know what I mean? Any which way you want, but if you boil it, especially people with iron deficiencies, they have to boil it and make a soup, like a broth. The water is a really, really dark, almost as if it was dirty.

BP: These are pretty hard.

S12: Yeah, but you have to soak them.

BP: You have to cook them like a bean.

S12: But if you, if you, if you use... you can use them green too just like a pea.

BP: Ok.

S12: This one I let dry up on purpose. Besides it is a very common grain in Puerto Rico. We eat it all the time.

BP: Oh really?

S12: Yeah, but basically this is the thing that people are told to eat when they have iron deficiencies. I mean it's just the choice, and this one is called ***romerillo***.

BP: Romerillo.

S12: I'm glad that it came out.

BP: I'm not sure, that's....

S12: It's not native to this place. I don't know how the hell it got in here but it's not native to California.

BP: It looks a little bit like fever few. What do you use it for, migraine headaches?

S12: No, diabetes. It just brings your sugar level all the way like this. If you take it as common water, it will bring your sugar level down in no time. It's very good for that, the whole thing: flower, stem, leaf, I mean you just dump the whole thing there. Very, very good. Very basic too.

BP: Very basic?

S12: Oh yeah, see that little bit?

BP: Yeah.

S12: If you come in two months it's going to be all over the place.

BP: Ok, so you don't mind if I take some?

S12: No, no don't tell me that. See that is the Sage that is native to California. I see it all over the place – in rivers and places like that. I was using this when I couldn't get that one, but now I can't get rid of it.

BP: This is actually an artemesia. Artemesias are also called sages.

S12: Yeah, its ok but...

BP: You got this locally?

S12: Yeah, I got it locally. It grows like crazy in Azusa canyon.

BP: Yeah, this is artemesia [¿??Scientific name].

S12: It grows crazy all over the place and you know if you work enough with it, but you have to struggle more with this one.

BP: Do you have to be careful not to take too much of this?

S12: Yeah, well that's what I noticed, and that's why I just took a trip to Puerto Rico to bring that one.

BP: What do you use it for?

S12: Usually, the same thing, asthma, pulmonary problems and stuff like that because I noticed it had the same capability but not as strong so you have to struggle more to apply more than the other one, and when I came to California I didn't have that one. Since I wasn't too sure with it, I just stopped using it and decided to go to Puerto Rico and get me one. Why, what's the [¿??] contraindication of this?

BP: You can overdose with it, and I've forgotten what the exact problem was but...

S12: I noticed that there were some problems with it, that's why I stopped using it because sometimes it...

BP: It's also used for deworming.

S12: Oh, that I didn't know but the thing that I know is that sometimes I didn't get what I wanted to get, or the conditions stayed the same, or sometimes it made the person unstable with the health, so I said oh forget it. It's not worth, you know. But now I can't get rid of it.

BP: You water it too much.

S12: Yeah, well, I have to tell my wife about that.

BP: Do you use the hibiscus at all for anything?

S12: Yeah, hibiscus tea, but you know, for some reason it's not doing as good here as it was doing before. I trimmed it but I'm going to have to trim it more and get rid of all this, so that it can get fuller, a fuller bush. This one is very good to get mosquitoes and pests away.

BP: That's citronella-like.

S12: Yeah, it does. It's very good, especially because if you are allergic to certain things, they just put it all over the place. It's very good. You can step on it. Usually when we have certain ceremonies, I'll throw it on the floor. When people step on it, it will release and it will take care of bugs.

BP: I have one of those in my back yard.

S12: They are big!

BP: It gets over 12 feet tall.

S12: Yeah, it's beautiful.

BP: It has a citronella-like scent.

S12: Yeah, and the same effect as citronella. It will just keep the bugs away, which is good especially in the summer. The rest are dormant. We are going to have to do it when everything else comes out, when the weather gets hotter.

BP: I marked about 10 plants so I'd like to get a specimen.

S12: Ok, lets go for it. You want to start here, or you want to start from the back?
BP: Is that too big of a specimen?

S12: No, that's ok. See, smell it on the bottom. It's a rosemary type that's why it's called romerillo, little rosemary even though they are used for different things; it's called romerillo because it has a rosemary-like... its very pungent. It grows about this high, and it has seeds that are long like this and when you pass by it just gets all over you.

BP: ¿???

S12: Now, "se estan tranquilos" (you guys stay calm). I was reaching for the same thing.

BP: Ooops, I'm sorry doggy.

S12: Ok shorty out! Shorty out! You want one of these, you said? Is it good?

BP: Yes, I wanted the Caribbean sage.

S12: Oh let me show you one that is already in bloom. Jones said he wanted a specimen of this one.

MOJ: What's that?

BP: It's a polygamon, sometimes called smartweed.

MOJ: Oh.

BP: I don't know what the use is for this. What do you use it for?

S12: Well it's got several uses. You can use it for a bath if you boil it and take a full bath with it, like an immersion bath. It's very good for cleansing skin impurities. I just got a little piece like this and it's all over the place but I don't want o get rid of this one. This one I don't want to get rid of.

BP: What about this one, do you use this a lot?

S12: Ritual, this is Mexican Sage but it is just basically ritually used.

BP: When you say ritual use, is this for...

S12: Cleansings, cleansings, floor wash, and things like that – ritual use. No [???] like this one if you have skin impurities like acne and stuff like that.

BP: So it's good to wash to make yourself smell good but not -

S12: Yeah, now they call it aromatherapy. My mother used to call it just a bath. You wanted the Caribbean Sage, right? There you go, there's a nice shot. Isn't it beautiful? It's gorgeous.

BP: It's huge.

S12: If you smell the cut, it smells sweeter than the one we had in front.

BP: Can I get one that had the flowers on it or do you need that?

S12: Sure. I thought you wanted to wait for the flowers that's why I cut that one.

BP: ¿??

S12: You might want to put it in water and it will open.

BP: There's another one with flowers inside.

S12: That one, if you put it in water it will open because they are quite developed now.

BP: But this is not a true sage.

S12: Let me see. Here, see, let me show you something. There's one here. You want this one?

BP: Yeah. This is in the sunflower family. But anyway, Caribbean sage.

S12: That's what we call it. Let's see what else we have here.

BP: ¿??

S12: No, no, it just grows pretty.

BP: Yeah.

S12: Let me see, want the plantain? This one is very good too. We use this one for cooking. It will take care of all the gas from beans.

BP: ¿?? This is another plant.

S12: It's a type of oregano, we call it "oregano brujo."

BP: I think this is in the same genus that this is. These are related. So you call it what?

S12: Oregano. It has like the other oregano. You want the plantain?

BP: No.

S12: You have enough of that all over the place.

BP: That's just a common weed.

MOJ: Which is the one that you call Bergamot?

S12: Oh, it's back here.

MOJ: Barry knows it by a different name.

BP: That is... that's bee balm, it has a lemony smell that bergamot has. That is melissa aficionalis, that's the scientific name.

S12: Ok.

BP: I bought it. You know I got it from you last year some time and I read up on it.

S12: Yeah, it's very good.

BP: Very good to relief nervous tension and get good sleep, so I took it and it works.

S12: It worked! Oh, good, ok, all right.

BP: I've got it growing in my yard.

S12: That's excellent. What else, what else do we have here?

BP: That tree out in front good for iron.

S12: Oh, the gandul? Sure. The rest are dormant and we have to wait until the weather is hotter for them to come out. You want some leaves and some pods? The flower is orchid. Oh here's the flower, look, look. It's closed. When it opens it's orchid like. You know how the orchid has like a big lip that falls, it's orchid-like. You want that?

Ok. So if you notice, see this is developing but when it's very green just like a pea then you boil it. It's really good. It's Puerto Rico's national dish. You know arroz con gandules is the thing. I mean, you can ask any Puerto Rican what a gandul is and (laughs).

BP: I understand they grow it in Nicaragua too?

S12: Probably, most probably they do because it grows all over the place and in Puerto Rico; it is the thing to have during Christmas.

BP: Oh really?

S12: Yeah, anywhere you go in Puerto Rico you will have rice with this thing.

BP: Rice and beans.

S12: Yeah, no but you know rice with that integrated into it, with pork and stuff like that, it's like, it grows there in December. Here since it's so cold it's still growing. Ok. I guess that's all for now. Because when they start coming out I'll let you know.

BP: Ok. well this is good. This solved a couple questions I had. One was the ***rompe***.

S12: Oh yeah.

BP: cause all I had was leaves before.

S12: Ooooh what you got there? Twenty million papers.

BP: This is just, yeah, a whole lot of papers but it's called the field press.

S12: We ship them in wet paper like that – when we ship them.

BP: Yeah?

S12: Yeah, we wet the newspaper because it holds water very good. It doesn't drip, so if you let it drip dry and you cover it with them, it will keep the plant fresh until it gets here.

BP: Normally when we dry plants, it's a cardboard, a sheet of paper with a specimen, and another cardboard. It makes it nice and flat.

S12: Ok, that's good to know.

BP: So they can - when they dry they don't get all crinkled up and the specimen lasts a lot longer. This is just a temporary thing until I...

S12: You get home.

BP: I think you're right. That's some form of lypia or lantana, and what did you call this again?

S12: Romerillo.

BP: Romerillo.

S12: That's the little rosemary.

BP: It smells like rosemary.

S12: Yeah, the little rosemary.

MOJ: Did you get the one in the corner?)

S12: That's the gandul.

BP: ¿??

S12: Yeah.

BP: This is the...

S12: Oregano. Now I don't feel so bad, knowing that we do the same thing. We do the newspaper thing.

BP: It's cheap.

S12: It's cheap and convenient and it's recyclable. That's good.

BP: In Mexico we used to go down to the market and they don't have paper bags.

S12: Oh yes, absolutely.

BP: They use to roll it up into a cone. They always have a big supply of newspapers.

S12: Oh yeah of newspapers?

BP: So you get them there. If I buy them by the pound – a peso a paper.

S12: In Cuba they sew it and make bags. They stitch it and make bags with it, and you have your newspaper bag – a very well informed bag.

BP: Several sheets of newspaper?

S12: Yeah, they stitch it together.

BP: Well even here they use newspapers at the floral market instead of a paper bag.

S12: Yeah, it holds water very well. You want a sample of this one?

BP: No.

S12: You have that one, ok, ok, so that's that.

BP: Do you use this at all?

S12: Yeah, I know that my mother used to use this, but if you kill me, I don't know what for, I didn't get that far. I found it here at a nursery and I bought it hoping that some day I would find out what my mother was using this for, because it's the very same one. So once in a while when you find things, you can't let them go because otherwise you lose it, so I know that my mother used to use this one, this part.

BP: This is in the same family that the castor bean is found. How about the aloe Vera?

S12: The aloe Vera, oh God, that's the cure all. There's nothing that that thing is not good for. You can use it for almost anything. You can drink it, eat it, you can use it over burns, you can use it on skin problems, and you can use it for stomach problems-ulcers. I mean what is it that that plant is not good for? Basically the rule is, if you don't have a plant for it, just have aloe Vera. It will just probably cure it too.

BP: Yeah, ok, and the [¿??] back there, the one with the spines on it.

S12: Oh, the African ¿?? cotton tree?

BP: ¿??

S12: No, this one you can also use it as an infusion for worms.

BP: The leaves?

S12: Yeah, the leaves. This one is an old one.

BP: They grow these a lot in Honduras.

S12: Yeah. You can't be a tree hugger with this one (laughs). This one forget it, you can't...this is a truly prickly personality.

BP: Lovebirds?

S12: Yeah, we started with a pair, there and a pair here. Those are my wives' pets.

BP: You keep them outside all winter long?

S12: Oh yes, just like that.

BP: No problem?

S12: No problem. Well, see they are very sheltered here from winds and drafts because the way the whole place is and they bunch up together so you know, we don't have any losses during winter. Just like the chickens, I'm going to have to raid their nest. They don't like me.

BP: It's amazing what you can get in this small space?

S12: Isn't it?

BP: Do you ever use this for anything?

S12: No, not really. This was a gift from a friend of mine and I just don't have any.

BP: I wondered why ¿??

S12: It grows pretty, that it does. It's very nice but...

BP: ¿??

S12: Oh God I always complained about my Latin. I took four years of Latin, trying to flee from French. I had such a bad French teacher. I can't stand it.

BP: French should have been easy.

S12: But the teacher wasn't. Both are romantic languages, Spanish and French but the thing is that the teacher was a real pain so I just decided... I was so frustrated; I ended up taking four years of Latin, of which I don't remember anything.

BP: ¿??

S12: Isn't it a bummer. It used to sound so good. No one knew what they were saying but it sounded good.

BP: I never went. I was Episcopalian so I never got to hear it.

S12: Oh, you're at a loss. The Latin mass was one of the most grandiose things. Oh it was grandiose. Even though, I discovered the Byzantine church is more grandiose than the Catholic, I mean they really know how to put a good show. That's why they got the Russians. They got more impressed with the Byzantine church than by the Catholic. But

Latin had a dignity that is no longer there with the vernacular. It doesn't do the trick of just sweeping you off to a different level. All right gentlemen, lady, I guess that's for now until the rest of the stuff comes out.

MOJ: Thank you.

S12: Absolutely.

BP: Thank you very much.

S12: Absolutely, any time, and I will be emailing you, or doing something about this thing with George.

BP: Do you get grapes off this thing?

S12: No, not really, the plant is too big. It's too huge and the grapes, the bunches are too small. They're edible but they are very small.

BP: Which kind of grape is this?

S12: It's the green seedless grape.

BP: My friends have very good success with the red flame seedless.

S12: This I built it just because of the shade. In the summer see how nice it is?

BP: Yeah.

S12: In the winter all the leaves are gone and you still get the sun so it's a handy dandy seasonal shelter.

END OF TAPE